

Asheville City Council
Planning and Economic Development Committee

2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m., November 14, 2007
Economic Development Office Conference Room

Minutes

Present: Councilman Jan Davis, Chair; Vice Mayor Holly Jones; Staff members: Sam Powers, Wendy Simmons, Mark Combs, David Hanks, Dan Baechtold, Nikki Gunter; City Manager Gary Jackson

Guests: John Bosier and Glen Swantchek – The Hillier Firm
Cate Marvill and Marla Tambellini – Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau

The Planning and Economic Development Committee met on November 14, 2007 at 29 Haywood Street at 2:00 p.m. Chair Jan Davis called the meeting to order.

1. Approval of Minutes

No action taken.

2. Updates, Status Reports and Presentations

Wayfinding Update

John Bosier and Glen Swantchek, of the Hillier Firm, gave an overview of the process to date, which has included meeting with many stakeholders and public open houses to come up with a favored schematic design. The system is for downtown, as well as regional locales, and the design will give everyone flexibility for their place but will give consistency for the overall design. The scope of the project includes, but is not limited to, gateways, vehicular design, pedestrian design, kiosks, orientation maps, and parking maps; it is a comprehensive wayfinding project. A representative from the Department of Transportation is on the steering committee.

Chair Davis voiced his approval of the overall design, but expressed concerns over the financial implications long term. Dan Baechtold responded that fabrication and installation will be covered by the product development fund of the TDA, with a partnership established with each of the municipalities involved in the project for ongoing funding for maintenance. Sam Powers, Economic Development Director, commended Mr. Baechtold, in that Dan has really stepped up to manage this project internally. Mr. Powers commented that the City has an opportunity to have tremendous return on the initial investment (City Council has allocated \$75,000); that a Memorandum of Understanding for maintenance issues would probably consist of \$50,000 - \$75,000 on an annual basis, and that the Department of Public Works will include the operation and maintenance line items in the proposed 2008-2009 budget.

Discussion concluded with Mr. Bosier commenting that a successful wayfinding system didn't necessarily get people to extend their length of stay, but makes people understand all that there is to do so they can make plans to return.

Chair Davis asked about next steps for the Committee. Staff replied that this would come before Council as a package, to be adopted as the Wayfinding Plan for the City. Also, since wayfinding is a strategic goal of Council, this will be included in the budget as we move forward into planning for the 2008-2009 fiscal year. Programming is expected to be done by the end of the calendar year.

3. Old Business

Infill and Affordable Housing Incentive Recommendation

David Hanks, Water Resources Director, presented a Staff Report (see attached) giving suggested policy changes after review of the City of Asheville Water Policies and the requirements of the Sullivan Acts concerning funding to assist in water line upgrades to encourage infill and affordable housing developments. Chair Davis and Vice Mayor Jones were encouraged by the report, and very complimentary of Mr. Hanks in achieving dedicated funding to address infill and affordable housing issues.

4. New Business

Bottle Recycling

Staff discussed the new laws going into effect on January 1st requiring all ABC holders to recycle their product, and the cost and logistical challenges generated by compliance, and presented documents listing recycling services offered to ABC holders, as well as two local case studies, for discussion and review (see attached). Chair Davis and Vice Mayor Jones directed staff to continue to facilitate collaboration and space for all businesses affected, provide technical support, and to explore regional solutions. Staff also noted that the Land of Sky Regional Council has developed a website specifically for ABC holders; it is Partnership4recycling.org.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30p.